

Additional IEP Team Decisions: MI-Access Participation

Once the most appropriate assessment is determined, there are some additional decisions that must be made *prior to conducting and scoring an observation*. For students taking the MI-Access Participation assessment, there are some unique scoring considerations that must be taken into account by the IEP Team members. The following sections outline key points to consider in determining *as expected*s, describe how to use the *as expected*s with the assessment scoring guide, and provide a *Determining As Expecteds for This Student Worksheet*.

Determining Individual Participation/Response Modes (As Expecteds) for Participation

The Participation assessment scoring is unique because it must be individualized to the student. This individualization is necessary because the severity of the student's impairment makes it impossible for the student to truly demonstrate or for us to accurately discern what s/he actually knows and is able to do. Therefore, the student's appropriate education must focus on opportunities to participate in life roles and contexts to whatever extent possible. MI-Access provides educators and parents with valuable information (assessment data) regarding those opportunities.

For information derived from the MI-Access Participation assessment to be of value for curriculum and instruction decisions, the individual participation/responses modes (*as expected*s) must be carefully written. They are the student's own educational benchmarks applied to the assessment.

The *as expected*s should reflect the student's present level of educational performance (PLEP), but the MI-Access assessment data cannot be the sole indicator of that PLEP. It is but one piece. The *as expected*s may or may not be specifically related to the student's IEP goals and objectives, but the MI-Access assessment data cannot be the single basis for IEP goals and objectives. It is factored in with other important IEP considerations.

What are individual participation/response modes (*as expected*s)? There are five key points to keep in mind:

1. ***As expected*s are descriptions of the student's own best and most reliable demonstrations** of participation. "Best" refers to the highest level the student can be expected to perform given his/her curriculum, instruction, and abilities. "Best" does *not* mean "hoped for" or "wished for" behaviors. Rather, the best expected behavior is grounded in the student's educational program and instruction. "Best" also refers to positive behaviors and demonstrations of participation. Therefore, *as expected*s are not written as inappropriate or negative behaviors even though they may be anticipated.

"Reliable" refers to a level of confidence that the student will demonstrate participation as expected. That is, the student's behaviors during the school day demonstrate some level of consistency. For example, a student most often uses sign language to communicate or usually cooperates with other's assistance to participate. This reliability coupled with the notion of "best" results in good *as expected*s that provide meaningful information from the MI-Access assessment data.

2. **Parents and educators are critical partners in determining *as expected*s** ("parent" as defined in Michigan's Special Education Rule 340.1701b(e)). Descriptions of the student's best and most reliable demonstrations of participation are derived from the input of educators who work with the student during his/her school day and of parents who live with the student during his/her non-school time. All see the student in a variety of contexts and activities. Sharing observations helps assure *as expected*s that truly are "best and most reliable" descriptions of behavior across contexts, not isolated behaviors unique to one setting.

Parents and educators gain insight into the student's participation patterns and behaviors when they work together on the *as expected*s. Understanding the commonalities and discrepancies across

contexts is important to effective planning and instruction. Including parents and other educators in this important step in the MI-Access process also enhances communications after the assessment, e.g. explaining assessment results, coordinating instruction, aligning home and school efforts, developing curriculum, etc.

3. **As expecteds measure participation not skills or skill development.** They are descriptions of individual participation/response modes that may be demonstrated by the student when given opportunities to participate in a variety of activities and contexts.
4. **As expecteds are written with as much detail as needed** to clearly identify the student's anticipated response to the opportunity to participate. This greatly enhances the reliability of the assessment results. How much detail is needed? The rule of thumb is this: the *as expected* should be detailed and clear enough so that someone other than the student's teacher could observe the same student in the same activity and make the same determination regarding the student's assessment score for that activity.
5. **As expecteds often transcend varied performance expectations and contexts.** For example, a student may use a picture board whether communicating when participating in typical patterns of activities (PE 1), conveying physical needs when participating in effective communication cycles (PE 3), or communicating health needs when participating in personal care, health, and safety routines (PE 4). Similarly, a student may follow verbal cues to participate in activities (PE 1) whether the context is instructional activities, interacting with friends, or cultural/artistic/entertaining events.

This means that the collaborative decisions recorded on the *Determining "As Expecteds for This Student" Worksheet* (following) may need little or no revision when the teacher is asked to "specify" the *as expecteds* on the assessment booklet Scoring Guide page for the various MI-Access Participation assessment activities. Writing *as expecteds* that are unique to each assessment activity may result in idiosyncratic assessment data rather than information that can be used for curriculum and instruction decisions. Detailed *as expecteds* are important as noted in key point #4.

Using Individual Participation/Response Modes (As Expecteds) with the Scoring Guide

The scoring guide for MI-Access Participation is based on a four-point scale and measures how a student responds to the *opportunity* to participate in an assessment activity (*not* on how well he or she performs it). The scoring guide asks whether the student's response is *more than* expected for this student, *as expected* for this student, *less than* expected for this student, or not evident.

MI-Access Participation Scoring Guide

Score Points

- 4 More than expected for this student
- 3 As expected for this student Specify: waves hands and vocalizes
- 2 Less than expected for this student
- 1 Not evident

Score point 3—or the "as expected for this student"—is meant to reflect what is referred to in the assessment as the student's individual best and most reliable *participation/response mode*. The teacher should use the *Determining "As Expecteds for This Student" Worksheet*—which has been completed by the IEP Team members—to fill in the *as expecteds* for score point 3. While the *as expecteds* recorded on the worksheet may require some minor tweaking to fit specific assessment activities, every effort should be made to write behaviors that are consistent with the collaborative decisions made by the IEP Team members (see key point #5).

It is important to keep in mind that a student's behavior—even if expected—cannot interfere with the completion of the assessment activity or cause harm to the student or others in the classroom. If it does, the student should be scored a 2 ("less than expected for this student") or a 1 ("not evident") depending on what takes place during the observation

Determining “As Expecteds for This Student”

The following worksheet should be used by IEP Team members to guide the conversation determining a student's participation/response modes or “as expected” behaviors. This may be done at the IEP meeting or at another time prior to receiving the assessment materials. Parents must be included whenever possible. It is important that “as expected” decisions are made collaboratively and not solely by the student's teacher. This assures broad, rich input from both educators and parents and results in *as expecteds* that align with the five key points noted previously.

The worksheet is a table organized in three columns:

- Column 1: -Lists the Performance Expectations (PE) which have been identified by AUEN as the desired and realistic end points of educational programs for students with severe or profound mental impairment and which are assessed by MI-Access Participation.
- Column 2: -Gives the Performance Requirements (PR) which define what is meant by the behavior(s) described in the Performance Expectation (PE) and are assessed by MI-Access Participation.

-Provides clarification of each Performance Requirement (PR) for the given PE.
- Column 3: -Gives examples of *as expecteds* for the given PR (Please note that the list of examples is not exhaustive and is not intended to give the only responses possible).

-Provides space to specify the *as expecteds* for this student